



Partnerships for Impact: Education in Focus

Annual Report 2023



Abdulla Al Ghurair
Foundation



Contents

Message from our Chairman	4
Message from our CEO	6
Executive Summary	8
2023 Impact	10
Empowering Youth for Elevated Livelihoods	12
Strategic Goals for 2025	12
Our Approach to Programmatic Development	14
Our Pillars	15
Our Programs — Education 360	16
Our Programs — Talent Development	28
Past Programs	44
Green Education and Sustainability at AGF	46
The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation at COP28	52
Thought Leadership	54
Knowledge Production	60
Stakeholder Engagement	62
Al Ghurair Foundation Youth Advisory Council	63
Community Engagement Events	64
Learn More and Stay Updated	67



Message from our Chairman

In 2023, we experienced a time marked by substantial difficulties, including geopolitical tensions, pressing environmental concerns, climate change, and deeply entrenched socioeconomic disparities. These challenges were particularly acute in the Arab region, which is home to over 200 million youth under 30, representing 60% of the population. Despite these obstacles, including difficult transitions from education to employment amid economic hardships, Arab youth have displayed remarkable resilience and innovation. They have shown that they are formidable agents of positive change when given the right support.

These young people inspire our Foundation's work to create opportunities that equip youth with critical skills for success. Since its inception in 2015, the Foundation has had the privilege of positively impacting over 110,000 youth, fostering personal development and driving community transformation. In 2023, we collaborated with more than 20 organizations to empower 29,000 youth through strategic programs and partnerships. Initiatives like Nomu, which has achieved remarkable success in the UAE, have been embraced in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia, demonstrating our dedication to replicating its effectiveness across the region.

Additionally, our commitment to nurturing young Emiratis is highlighted by the launch of Takween, the first comprehensive after-school program for Emirati students aged 13 to 18. Launched in public schools, Takween employs advanced project- and activity-based teaching methods to improve student engagement and skill development.

As we continue to adapt to the evolving needs of the education and employment sectors, particularly with AI integration, we've scaled up our work in the online learning space. This includes leveraging innovative technologies and strategic partnerships with leading local, regional, and global universities, government bodies, and education experts. Since 2016, our efforts have enhanced digital opportunities in higher education, positively impacting nearly 13,000 youth. Our goal is to ensure that our youth have access to high-quality online learning, improving education and employment outcomes across the region.

As we progress, our priority is to equip youth with the skills needed for a sustainable, technologically advanced future. This is made possible through strong strategic multi-sector partnerships. Our collaborative approach has enabled us to amplify a collective positive impact that will create enduring benefits for our communities.

We are deeply committed to this journey and to the young leaders who make it possible.

H.E. Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair
Chairman, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation



Message from our CEO

2023 was the Year of Sustainability, characterized by the strong theme of cultivating today for a stronger tomorrow. At the Foundation, we are committed to facilitating the path to high-quality education, empowering youth to shape their futures and drive the transformation towards a greener future. We continue to work towards a world where education is accessible to all, promoting a culture of lifelong learning, knowledge exchange, and holistic education.

As we look back, we are astounded by our youth, who embody dedication and take the lead in their own success. We are also fortunate to have the guidance of the UAE's visionary leaders and the unwavering support from our strategic partners. They enable us to continue advancing education, breaking barriers, and creating pathways for a brighter future. It is with great pleasure that we present the 2023 annual report, which reflects not only our progress in the past year but also the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and commitment that defines our work.

This year, we focused on holistic education and talent development, leveraging the Nexus model to facilitate access to inclusive, high-quality education, and amplifying our work in greening education by partnering with the UAE Ministry of Education. We launched the Ecopreneurship Program, using a well-designed process to support youth in creating impactful startups in the sustainable development sector. In recognition of the importance of a participatory approach to education, we worked with our partners to design and implement community workshops that engaged communities in climate action and inspired sustainable habits.

As we mark our achievements, we acknowledge the challenges that a rapidly evolving world presents. We are dedicated to ensuring that the successful collaborations that were fostered at this year's COP28 continue, fueling our determination to adapt to evolving needs and champion innovative solutions. Moving forward, let us continue to be collective agents for positive change, united by the belief that education is the cornerstone of progress.

Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar

Chief Executive Officer, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation
Chairperson, the Global Council on Sustainable Development Goals



Executive Summary

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation was established in 2015 to leverage education in helping Emirati and Arab youth thrive and contribute to the sustainable growth of the Arab region. The Foundation has positively impacted over 110,000 Emirati and Arab youth to date.

The Foundation's initiatives fall under two pillars:

1. **Education 360**, with a focus on facilitating access to high-quality education through innovative technologies and teaching methods.
2. **Talent Development**, with a focus on bridging the education-to-employment gap by providing youth with essential, market-driven skills and experiences.

This report highlights the Foundation's efforts in reaching new learners and expanding its impact through its collaborative strategic philanthropy approach.

Important achievements for 2023 include:

- Expanding the Foundation's programs to include youth between the ages of 13-17 to address broader youth needs more effectively.
- Scaling the UAE home-grown successes to the Arab region.
- Leveraging technology to provide more quality online programs.
- Creating and sharing knowledge and best practices for supporting decision-making in the wider education ecosystem.





2023 Impact

35,000+

new learners reached

20+

new partnerships cultivated

10,000+

youth impacted through the support of online learning at universities in the MENA Region

20+

engagements at COP 28

125

faculty trained through UCQOL

7

thought leadership engagements

89

graduates from scholarship programs

7

knowledge products published

22

online courses launched through UCQOL

3

new pathways under Nomu Initiative





Empowering Youth for Elevated Livelihoods

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF) was established in 2015 as the largest privately funded philanthropy in the Arab region focused on education. AGF leverages a partnership-based and impact-driven strategic philanthropy approach to empower Emirati and Arab youth. AGF supports youth's successful transition into higher education and the labor market through high-quality and evidence-based education and skill-building solutions.



Strategic Goals for 2025

Provide

200,000 Emirati and Arab youth

with innovative, high-quality education and skill-building opportunities that lead to elevated livelihoods

Leverage knowledge and technology

partnerships

to help ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning in the Arab region





Our approach to Programmatic Development

Preparing Emirati and Arab youth to contribute to the region's sustainable growth is a shared responsibility among relevant stakeholders. Key players like the private sector, the government, education providers, and youth play important roles in achieving this. The Foundation works with its strategic partners to create market-driven programs that improve youth's skills and employability.

The Foundation uses a three-step model to develop its programs:



Identification

Understanding gaps and opportunities in education and employment through research and consultations.



Design

Leveraging partnerships to co-create innovative solutions that support youths' education and employment journeys.



Implementation

Closely monitoring solutions that are implemented by partner organizations to ensure maximum impact.

Following this approach, the Foundation's work aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Employment), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The Foundation embraces the Nexus model, recognizing the interconnection of the SDGs, and the alignment with the national UAE Vision 2030. The Foundation aims to facilitate inclusive and equitable quality education that leads to improved standards of living for all.



Our Pillars

The Foundation's programs fall under two main pillars:



Education 360

This pillar utilizes innovative models to improve learning outcomes and expand access to high-quality education. Education 360 seeks to support the education ecosystem in the UAE and the Arab region using the latest education technologies and teaching methods.

- **Takween**
- **University Consortium for Quality Online Learning**
- **Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning**
- **Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Program**



Talent Development

This pillar aims to equip youth with market-driven skills, relevant knowledge, and practical learning. With a focus on technical and transferable skills, it leverages industry-recognized professional certifications as well as training and mentoring opportunities that lead to successful career outcomes.

- **Nomu**
- **Nomu Regional**



Our Programs

Education 360



| Takween

Launched in: 2023

In partnership with: Emirates School Establishment (ESE)

Takween is the UAE's first comprehensive after-school enrichment program for Emirati students between the ages of 13 and 18. Takween aims to raise the awareness and advance the skill levels of students while integrating national identity and global citizenship across learning experiences.

With the objective of reaching 5,000 students by 2025, Takween leverages a hands-on, activity-based, and innovative approach to equip learners with future-facing skills.

Takween promotes creativity and informed decision-making across its three main pillars:

Academic Strengthening

- Prepare learners to successfully complete their secondary and post-secondary education.
- Support learners in key academic disciplines like mathematics, science, and the English language.

Skill Development

- Equip learners with key transferable skills like communication, critical thinking, and teamwork.
- Increase youth's knowledge of local and global challenges and possible solutions.

Success Advising

- Increase learners' awareness about careers in the UAE, focusing on the private sector, in line with Emiratization efforts.
- Provide career guidance to improve students' self-awareness.

Takween has launched three tailor-made projects.

1. **The Sustainability Series** leverages hands-on STEM activities that focus on sustainability, climate change, and food security.
2. **Design and creativity-focused workshops** that are designed to strengthen students' cultural knowledge and collaboration skills using heritage awareness.
3. **Skill-development Workshops** that focus on communication, English, entrepreneurship, and coding, among other future-focused skills.

In its first term, Takween implemented its activities at the Zayed Educational Complex in Al Mizhar, Dubai.

**Reaching 178 students****53% Boys****47% Girls****Training 19 facilitators**

Takween will work with strategic partners and experts to further expand and deliver more workshops and activities across the UAE.



“After joining the Climate Awareness workshop, I learned how climate change is impacting us and the planet. Now I want to do more to protect the environment because even small things we do can make a big difference, and it benefits us and our planet. I care a lot about marine life and biodiversity, and I found out that releasing carbon dioxide is harming them. I know my actions matter, so I want to take steps to help our environment.”

Climate Fresk Workshop Participant

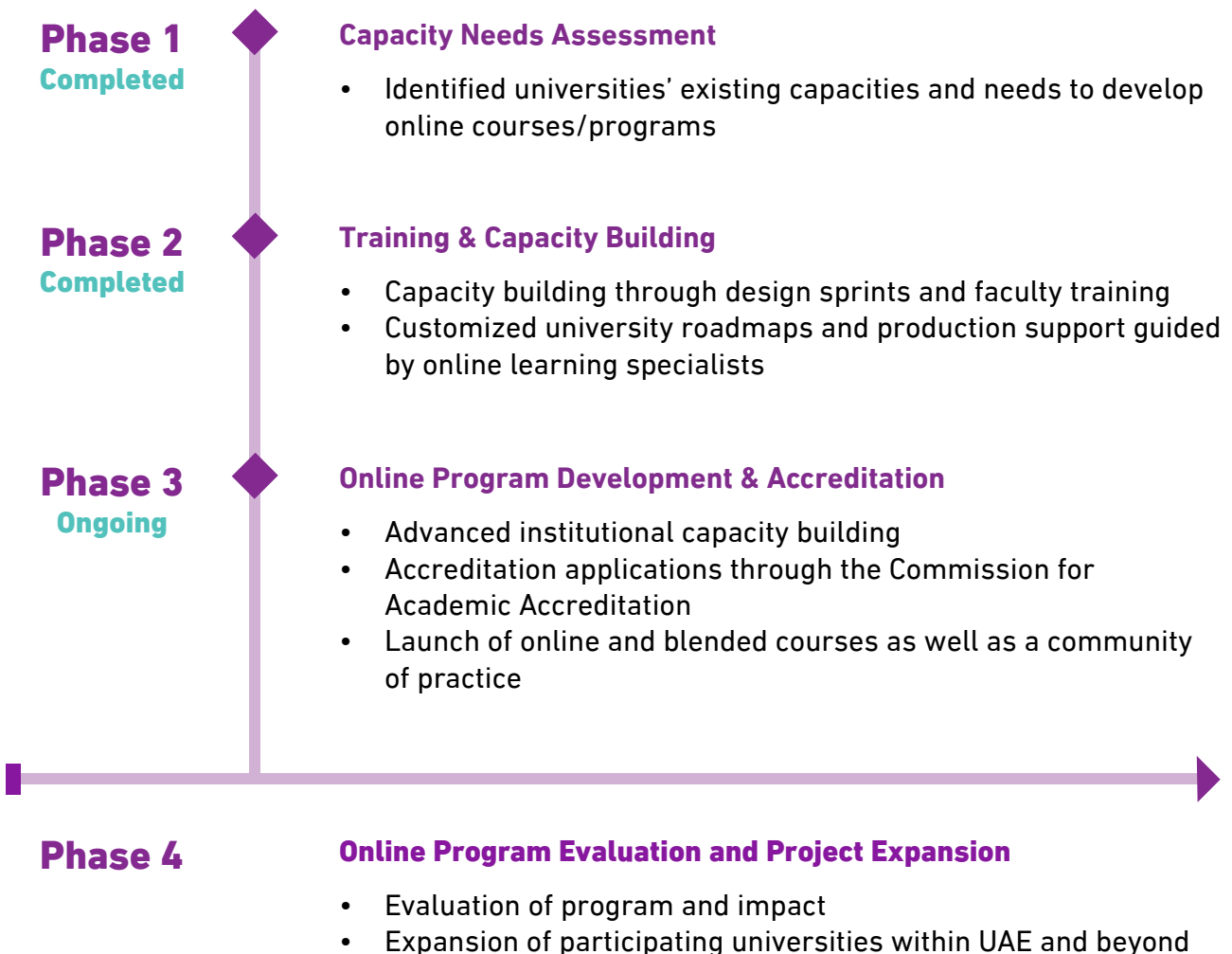
The University Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL)

Launched in: 2020

In partnership with: UAE Ministry of Education and 9 universities

- American University in Dubai
- Zayed University
- Khalifa University
- University of Dubai
- American University of Sharjah
- University of Sharjah
- United Arab Emirates University
- New York University Abu Dhabi
- British University in Dubai

UCQOL aims to provide inclusive and innovative educational opportunities for Emirati and Arab youth. As the first consortium of its kind in the Arab region, UCQOL utilizes a multi-phased approach to build the capacity of higher education institutions, enabling them to produce market-driven, student-centric, and accredited online programs.



By leveraging partnerships and innovative approaches for sustainable impact, the consortium:

- Serves as a learning community for universities, encouraging collaboration.
- Equips key stakeholders with technical expertise to deliver high-quality online programs.
- Responds to the needs and goals of each university, providing additional institutional grants where relevant.

To date, UCQOL has:

- Designed **70** courses
- Launched **22** courses
- Trained **125** faculty members
- Awarded **1 institutional grant**
- Launched the first **Abdulla Al Ghurair Digital Technology and Learning Center** at the American University of Sharjah
- Received the 2023 UNESCO-ICHEI Higher Education Digitalization Pioneer Case **Award** (University of Sharjah)



“My journey with UCQOL has been incredibly rewarding, and I am immensely grateful for the invaluable experiences and knowledge that profoundly influenced both my personal and professional growth. Through UCQOL, I gained a spectrum of specific skills and knowledge, including enhanced research abilities, refined critical thinking, and honed communication skills through collaborative online projects. The consortium enhanced my adaptability to the online learning environment, improved my time management skills, and broadened my perspective on various subjects. Professionally, the program equipped me with valuable insights and knowledge, enhancing my capabilities and confidence. Whether it’s in academia, professional pursuits, or personal projects, these competencies will undoubtedly serve as a foundation for success.”

Dr. Sania Ashraf, Director of Graduate Programs,
University of Dubai



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| Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning

Launched in: 2021

In partnership with: Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) at the American University of Beirut

The Al Ghurair Hub uses innovative learning technologies and approaches to advance online STEM education in the region. With a commitment to narrowing the digital education gap, the Hub aims to increase access to high-quality online education for more youth in Lebanon and beyond.

The Hub employs a two-pronged approach:



Launch 15 online master's programs, diplomas, and certificates in its first 3 years.



Digitize existing residential courses to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

In line with its objectives to serve as a regional leader in online learning, the Hub seeks to:

- Contribute to raising the quality of online learning in the Arab region.
- Build the capacity of regional institutions and encourage knowledge exchange.
- Enhance access to engaging and collaborative online and blended learning opportunities.

Since its launch in 2021, the Hub has:

Produced **37** courses

Digitized **35** residential courses

Launched **6** online programs

Launched **1** massive open online course (MOOC)

Created **2** toolkits

Participated in **7** webinars and **3** international consultations

Reached **848** students:





“I was apprehensive at first given my limited knowledge of coding and because coding can be daunting at first. But the program at the Hub opened my eyes to many possibilities which I did not think were possible. It provided me with plenty of support, including the tools to understand AI, which has become omnipresent nowadays. I am particularly fond of the Spring term courses so far on AI ethics and public policies and the real-life examples and applications. I am excited to attempt to incorporate data science techniques in causal inference in epidemiology studies.”

Rima Kaddoura, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, Professional Graduate Diploma (Program developed by the Hub)

| Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Program

Launched in: 2022

In partnership with:

- University of Waterloo
- Khalifa University
- University of Sharjah
- United Arab Emirates University

The Foundation launched the WIL program to support the localization of experiential learning models at UAE universities. In line with the UAE's national growth strategy and Emiratization goals, the program focuses on enhancing the employability of UAE graduates by incorporating market-driven employment experiences in higher education.

The program connects key stakeholders through a multi-phased approach.

Phase 1: Scoping requirements, viability, and planning (Completed in 2023)

Through 160 hours of scoping analysis with multiple stakeholders, including 4 universities, this phase:

- Assessed the feasibility of implementing WIL in UAE institutions
- Explored stakeholders' needs and existing capacity
- Developed a report on WIL readiness for relevant stakeholders in the UAE
- Produced 4 practical notes on implementing WIL programs within each partner university

Phase 2: Capacity-building and local pilot implementation (2023-2025)

With the aim of facilitating capacity building, training, and resourcing, this phase aims to:

- Launch a national community of practice and an employability certificate
- Train and equip partner UAE universities to implement experiential learning

Phase 3: Expansion of WIL programs (Completed by 2026)

This phase will focus on:

- Program evaluation and adjustments
- Expansion to more universities and programs



Our Programs

Talent Development





Nomu

Nomu

Launched in: 2021

In partnership with: expert implementing partners

- Udacity
- Skyrise Partners
- CNN Arabic
- Sprints
- Project You

Nomu is a national youth development initiative that adopts a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder approach. It aims to upskill 25,000 Emirati youth by 2025 through high-quality training pathways. Focused on the skills required for a digital, knowledge-based economy, Nomu seeks to contribute to a globally competitive local and regional talent pool.

Driven by the UAE’s priority sectors and in alignment with the UAE’s vision, Nomu’s pathways equip youth for diverse employment and freelancing opportunities.

Nomu pathways:

- Equip learners with 10 future-facing World Economic Forum-identified competencies.
- Address immediate skill gaps in a short duration (1-6 months).
- Provide market-driven certifications and specializations.
- Adopt a collaborative design developed with industry experts and the private sector.
- Prioritize underserved youth, including women and those in remote areas.

Nomu Pathways



TechUp



Siraj



Leap Talent
Incubator



Nomu
Women



Nomu
Cyber

— Launched in 2022 — | — Launched in 2023 —

| TechUp

Launched in: 2022

In partnership with: Udacity

TechUp aims to train 20,000 Emirati youth in diverse levels of digital fluency and skills to become the UAE's future leaders and entrepreneurs.

In line with UAE national priorities, TechUp offers 3 specializations:

1. User Experience Design
2. Agile Software Development
3. Data Analysis & Data Visualization with Power BI

TechUp has two phases:

1

Foundational phase

- Self-paced, 6-week-long learning journey with subject matter experts
- Focused on foundational digital literacy skills

Filtration Assessment: certified learners from Phase 1 complete this assessment to qualify for Phase 2.

2

Nanodegree program phase

- A 3-month, self-guided program
- Advanced content co-developed by some of the world's leading companies like Google and Amazon

Since its launch, TechUp has reached:

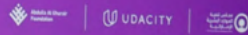
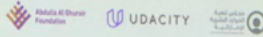
22,000+ learners

335 nanodegree certificates received

56% females

90% report positive learning outcomes 6-12 months after completing their nanodegree

ireside Chat



Mr Ali Kessrwani,
Middle East & Asia Director of
Societal Impact at Udacity



Mr Ahmad AlKhallafi,
Managing Director, UAE and Africa,
Hewlett Packard Enterprises

to Opportunities



I am extremely grateful for the Foundation for giving me the opportunity to enrol in TechUp. TechUp helped me develop a variety of transferable and technical skills, such as building user-friendly applications and websites and prioritizing 'user experience' throughout the process. I also had the opportunity to tackle both theoretical and practical work, such as creating a new project step by step and predicting users' needs. My UX Design Nanodegree has already provided me with numerous opportunities. For example, after getting my certification, I was able to compete in the Emirates skills competition in Web Technology, where I won a silver medal using my design skills. I highly recommend TechUp to any student in any major who want to stand out in the job market and unlock opportunities in the future.

Sarah Al Raesi , UX Design, Data Analysis and Visualization, and Agile Development Graduate

| Siraj

Launched in: 2022

In partnership with: CNN Arabic

Siraj is a 6-week communication skills training program that aims to prepare Emirati youth for the job market. By focusing on future-facing transferable skills like critical thinking, strategy building, and storytelling, Siraj empowers participants to better tell their own stories and succeed in the evolving world of work.

Siraj successfully engaged participants through:



Sessions delivered by senior industry executives and CNN journalists to improve youth's storytelling skills.



Hands-on projects to enhance crucial transferable skills.



Strategic partnerships with multi-sector stakeholders to facilitate employment and experiential learning opportunities.

By 2023, Siraj recorded:

203 learners

76% female

160+ original stories



“Siraj has profoundly influenced both my personal and professional development. The program provided a transformative space for me to sharpen my storytelling skills. Additionally, the emphasis on debating, an area where I initially faced challenges, has empowered me with the ability to effectively present and persuade. The program has not only bolstered my self-confidence but has also equipped me with valuable tools to delegate effectively, utilize software for task management, and embrace adaptability in my routine.”

Ameera Abdulla Bin Ofai, Siraj Graduate

| Nomu Women

Launched in: 2023

In partnership with: Skyrize Partners

Nomu Women aims to upskill 500 young Emirati women with industry-recognized management and leadership skills to prepare them for corporate careers and entrepreneurship. In line with its objective to increase women's representation in managerial and leadership roles in the UAE, the program includes sessions led by internationally experienced female trainers and executives. It also incorporates practical learning, engaging learners with private sector companies for internships and professional networking.

Nomu Women runs for 5 weeks, during which learners acquire skills and competencies such as:



Setting career goals



Planning and growth mindset



Management and communication



Networking

Nomu Women works with strategic partners such as the private sector, enabling them to support the program on three fronts:

Training in “Women in Management & Leadership”

Mentorship to support career counseling and networking

Workplace opportunities by committed private sector partners

In 2023, Nomu Women recorded:

40+ women enrolled

6 emirates coverage

70% fresh graduates/students and **30%** young professionals

70% actively looking for an internship or job opportunity

90% active participation

5 strategic partnerships fostered



Nomu Women has positively impacted my personal and professional growth in just five weeks. The program's diverse curriculum, covering career advancement, CV and LinkedIn workshops, time management, storytelling, and a capstone group project, provided a comprehensive approach to women's leadership. These sessions enhanced my practical skills in areas like resume building and time management and fostered a deeper understanding of effective communication. Participating in Nomu Women allowed me to make new friends and valuable industry connections but also ignited excitement for what lies ahead in my professional journey. Most importantly, the program prompted meaningful self-reflection.

Noor Rahmeh, Nomu Women Graduate

| Nomu Cyber

Launched in: 2023
In partnership with: Sprints

Nomu Cyber aims to enhance the skills of Emirati youth in the highly demanded cybersecurity field. Taking the form of a 14-week bootcamp, the program is designed to establish learners in the industry by providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the main pillars of cybersecurity.

Nomu Cyber equips learners with critical technical and transferable skills:

- ◆ **Business essentials and transferable skills** for professional and personal success
- ◆ **Project management & Agile methodology skills** for effective management of diverse projects
- ◆ **Cybersecurity core concepts and specializations** for a deeper understanding of cybersecurity

To ensure the best learning outcomes, the program uses:



Live Sessions



Agile Work Environment



Team-based Learning



360 Feedback System



Continuous Assessment Channel

Launched in 2023, the program recorded:

114 enrollments



58% Female



75% Emirati



“Nomu Cyber was very important to my professional development. It helped me develop a thorough understanding of different cyber concepts, including ethical hacking and risk management. Because of the program’s emphasis on practical skills and valuable hands-on learning experiences, I was able to use theoretical knowledge in real-life scenarios, developing my skills in tackling security concerns in the automotive industry. I am grateful for the Foundation for giving me this opportunity and for its support throughout, ensuring that I got the maximum benefit out of this program. I believe that youth like me need more programs like this to help us keep up with the fast-changing market and further unlock our potential.”

Ziad Itani, Nomu Cyber Graduate

| Leap Talent Incubator

Launched in: 2023

In partnership with: Project You

Leap Talent Incubator seeks to create entry pathways for Emirati youth, preparing them for the workforce. The 6-week skill development program works with strategic partners to form a community that connects talent, industry, and policymakers.

Since its launch, the program has enrolled **150** learners with the objective of:

- Nurturing talent in line with the needs of the local economy.
- Enhancing creativity and problem-solving skills.
- Fostering work ethics and professional skills.

Leap Talent Incubator engages learners in three phases:

Discovery

Learners complete micro-projects set by industry partners.

Personal Pathways

Learners work with career coaches to develop their career plan.

Skill Mastery

Learners complete in-depth projects with real opportunities for job placement.

Leap supported:

150 learners

111 graduates

82% Emirati, **18%** Arab

78% females



“Since joining Leap, I’ve gained a better understanding of myself and my values. I’ve established personal goals that have not only kept me focused on my personal and professional development but also helped me manage my time more effectively. The program has been instrumental in teaching me how to set SMART goals, collaborate within teams, work on projects, and enhance my communication skills. Learning these skills under the guidance of professionals has reshaped my mindset, leading to positive changes in my life. I am currently living out one of the goals I set during the Leap program, and I continue to apply techniques such as envisioning the future and setting goals to achieve my aspirations.”

Alya Al-Ali, Leap Graduate

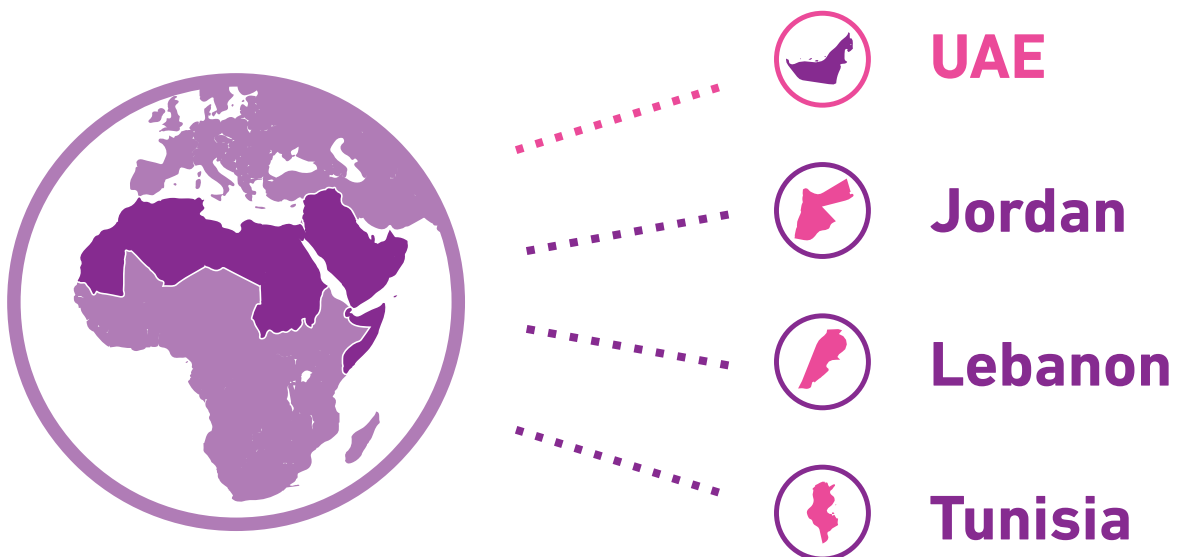
| Nomu Regional Expansion

Following its success in the UAE, the Foundation has expanded Nomu to the Arab region, starting in Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia in 2023, with plans to pursue other Arab countries in subsequent years.

The expansion followed the **Nomu UAE** model, applying the 3Cs approach to ensure programs are contextualized, comprehensive, and centered around the needs of youth. The Foundation partnered with three experienced and locally based organizations: Al Hussein Technical University (HTU) in Jordan, Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) in Lebanon, and Fondation Tunisie pour le Développement (FDT) in Tunisia.

Nomu's regional expansion provides three pathways catering to diverse needs:

1. **Bridge programs:** foundational courses and English language support.
2. **Upskilling opportunities:** short, accredited, and certified digital upskilling programs that are aligned with market needs.
3. **Business skills support:** for talented youth and young entrepreneurs.





Mr. Baddreddine Ouali,
President, Fondation Tunisie
pour le Développement



“The partnership with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation in launching the ‘Nomu’ initiative is a strategic move to expedite global goal achievement. It amplifies the Arab region’s role in supporting this international agenda, showcasing the significance of institutional initiatives in advancing the UAE’s national strategy to empower youth and integrate sustainable development goals into both institutional and societal realms.”

H.E. Abdulla Lootah, Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Competitiveness and Knowledge Exchange; Vice-President of the Global Councils on Sustainable Development Goals



Past Programs

| Al Ghurair Scholarship Programs

The Al Ghurair scholarship programs provide high-achieving, underserved Arab youth with financial assistance and academic and non-academic support.

The Foundation has two scholarship programs that focus on providing youth with access to high-quality higher education. While the programs took in their last cohorts in 2021, there are 144 continuing scholars who will graduate by 2024.

1. **Al Ghurair STEM Scholars Program:** undergraduate or graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.
2. **Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program (OLSP):** graduate online degrees and credentials.

Since launch, 899 scholars graduated from the scholarship programs with:

47% female

404 OLSP scholars

495 STEM scholars

68% employed or pursuing internships

17% are pursuing further studies

Through an alumni community that promotes meaningful collaboration and knowledge exchange, the Foundation engages graduates in a variety of ways:

- **Alumni Community Group on LinkedIn** connects alumni from different programs.
- **5 Country Hubs** connect scholars and alumni who reside within the same country.
- **10 Alumni Chapters** bring together alumni with similar academic backgrounds.
- **Capacity-building Workshops** equip alumni with essential skills to support their growth.
- **Monthly Alumni Newsletter** shares relevant news to support alumni's careers.
- **Events and engagements** held in 2023 were 50+ virtual and 20+ in person.



"It all began with a dream to help people around the globe and specifically my people, Palestinians. To help change the world, I knew I'd have to excel academically. My academic journey started with pursuing my undergraduate studies at the best university in the Middle East, the American University of Beirut (AUB). I received a scholarship from the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF) to attend AUB. This opened doors for me to pursue further higher education and lifelong learning, enabling me to later pursue my master's degree in Global Health at Duke University. AGF played an important role in my success, encouraging me to excel by setting the bar high in terms of GPA requirements and constantly checking in. The Foundation was a great source of support and motivation, offering multiple learning and development opportunities. I am grateful for AGF scholarship program, and I encourage youth to regularly check AGF programs and enroll in them."

Nour Hammad, STEM Scholarship Graduate



Green Education and Sustainability at AGF

The Foundation is committed to facilitating access to high-quality education, including green education, to empower youth to engage in climate action and drive sustainable development.

To this end, the Foundation works with its partners towards a collective goal of addressing sustainability challenges through education and skill building.

Greening Communities

The Foundation partnered with the UAE Ministry of Education to lead the Greening Communities pillar. This is one of the four pillars of UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership (GEP) which supports climate action through sustainable education. The Foundation's work on greening communities aims to:

- Promote environmental consciousness and empower youth with entrepreneurial skills.
- Raise environmental and climate-change-related awareness.
- Facilitate climate and sustainability education.
- Build youth's skills, knowledge, and capacity to contribute to climate action.





| Ecopreneurship Bootcamp

Launched in: 2023

In partnership with: UAE Ministry of Education, Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa) and Expo City

The Ecopreneurship Program is designed to empower the UAE's youth to drive sustainable development and promote eco-conscious values. The program enables young entrepreneurs to transform their viable ideas into actionable business ventures in the sectors of climate change, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

The Ecopreneurship Program recorded:

1,000 applicants

150 selected participants

5 finalist teams pitched at COP28

3 winning teams

Participants embarked on a 4-month journey, consisting of 4 stages.

Stage 1 **Weekend Bootcamp** 150 Participants

- 10-day startup ideation bootcamp, providing youth with the necessary tools, mentorship, and insights.
- The top five teams that successfully completed the bootcamp were awarded notable equity-free grant.

Stage 2 **Pre-accelerator** 5 Teams

- Over 5 weeks, teams built the startup foundation and prepared for their final pitch.
- Participants were provided with expert insights on goal setting, product development, and market strategies.

Stage 3 **Pitch at COP28** 5 Teams

- A final pitch competition, showcasing five winning solutions.
- Three teams that won the pitch competition secured awards.

Stage 4 **Accelerator** 3 Teams

- A 16-week customized accelerator program to successfully launch startups.
- Guided by Experts-in-Residence (EiRs) from Sheraa, teams develop their concepts and become market-ready.
- Participants were provided with one-on-one coaching from EiRs, a vast network of clients and partners, and financial grants.

The three winning teams:

- **ECOSAT** proposed an innovative and cost-effective approach, leveraging satellite imagery and AI models to monitor pollutant sources globally.
- **Golden JoTree** proposed a startup to generate revenue through local jojoba oil production and distribution using innovative agriculture techniques that improve soil quality.
- **AIN, by TYAR**, proposed an intelligent solar-powered irrigation system that can revolutionize water management in agriculture, transforming traditional agricultural practices.

The Ecopreneurship Program included the “Startup Blueprint,” an 8-week online platform for continuous development. This supported participants who did not advance to the pre-acceleration stage to nurture their ideas and navigate the world of entrepreneurship.



My experience in the Eco-preneurship program was incredibly rewarding. The highlight for me was collaborating with my peers and our instructors to delve into the issue and its underlying causes to find a solution. Addressing an environmental problem while making sure the business remained sustainable, cost-effective, and met the needs of our target market was challenging but educational. I learned a lot and built amazing relationships with driven, like-minded young people.

Bashayer Alsalami

| Sustainability and Climate Action Workshops

Launched in: 2023

In partnership with: UAE Ministry of Education and Goumbook.

Through a series of sustainability and climate action workshops, this program aims to raise awareness about climate change, engage communities in climate action, and inspire sustainable habits. By clarifying the connections between individual actions and the global climate crisis, the series enhances participants' understanding of how they can contribute to the collective goal of transforming the planet for a greener future.

Creating awareness to inspire action through engaging local UAE communities in sustainability-focused activities:

24

Green Workshops



**Sustainable
meal-packing**

1,300+

Community Members



**Tree
planting**

7

Emirates



**Beach
clean-ups**



“The Sustainable meal-packing workshop was truly eye opening. We not only learned to change our food purchasing habits but also discovered effective ways to limit food waste and reduce our environmental footprint. It’s been a transformative experience that’s influencing positive change in our daily lives.”

Maitha Ben Zaad



The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation at COP28

In 2023, as a continuation of its commitment to sustainable and green education, the Foundation participated in the United Nations annual climate change conference – COP28.

The Foundation shared its insights on the interconnection of education and sustainability and provided the following takeaways:

- Strategic partnerships are crucial in establishing and advancing climate initiatives.
- It is key to integrate sustainability across all sectors and levels.
- Evidence-based climate action can empower youth-led efforts in addressing present and future challenges.





◆ **Creating a Sustainable Legacy: How Young People Can Drive Climate Mitigation**

Organizers: AGF, Masdar, and UAE Ministry of Education (before COP28)

This panel discussion focused on unleashing the potential of youth to drive climate action.



◆ **Building Inclusive Green Communities for a Community-driven Transition**

Organizers: AGF and UAE Ministry of Education (during COP28)

The role of lifelong learning in amplifying the voices of marginalized groups



◆ **Empowering Tomorrow's Green Leaders: Digital Upskilling for Youth Climate Entrepreneurs and the Next Generation of the Green Workforce**

MENA Climate Week

Organizers: AGF and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the road to COP28)

Bridging the youth skills gap in the MENA region's green and digital sectors



Thought Leadership

The Foundation values sharing knowledge and exchanging experiences for a deeper enrichment of the education and development ecosystem. Thought leadership events, where key experts and leaders meet to discuss pressing topics in education, sustainability, job readiness, and inclusivity, aim to extend successful engagements across sectors and geographies.

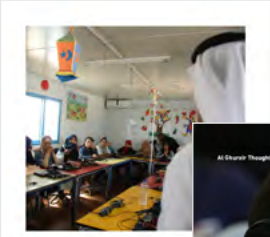




Thought Leadership



Creati
p



The UAE region has a strong tradition of giving with philanthropy in the way of zakat. Significant quantities are donated to finance infrastructure, education, health and a range of other charities in short-term, targeting immediate relief or responding to sudden or unforeseen natural and man-made disasters through targeted efforts. These resources have the potential to create a sustainable and lasting positive, community-based and collaborative environment.

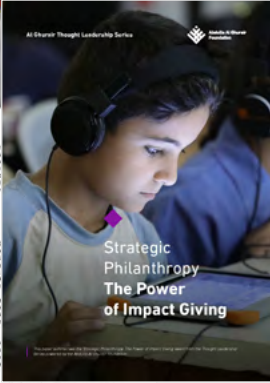
AGF has an ambition to be the best in-class philanthropic fund and commitment.

On May 18th 2023, the Abdulla Al Ghurair Thought Leadership Series event on 'The Power of Impact Giving' was held. The full potential of impact investing, social impact and the power of strategic philanthropy were explored by Sheikh Majid Al Mulla, Chairman of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Philanthropy.

During the event, the guest speaker, H.E. Dr. Khalid Al Ghurair, Chairman of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Philanthropy, discussed the role of the UAE.

The event was attended by high-profile guests including the Hon. Dr. Khalid Al Ghurair, Chairman of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Philanthropy, and other industry leaders.

Drawing from the perspectives shared by the speakers, this paper presents the key takeaways from the event and offers valuable recommendations for inspiring philanthropic impact.



Strategic Philanthropy: The Power of Impact Giving Organizers: AGF and Capital Club Dubai

This paper draws on strategic philanthropy approaches shared by two prominent philanthropists to present recommendations for unlocking the potential of philanthropy, stressing the importance of partnerships for sustainable outcomes.



Launch of UNHCR's 5th Islamic Philanthropy Annual Report

Organizers: AGF and UNHCR

This paper highlights the role of Islamic philanthropy in positively impacting the lives of the world's most vulnerable communities and the best practices in maximizing its outreach.



Supporting Online Learning in Tertiary Education

Organizers: AGF and UAE Ministry of Education

This paper shares best practices, challenges, and opportunities of delivering quality online learning courses and programs in tertiary education by stakeholders of the University Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL).



IGNITE TechTalk Conference

Organizers: AGF, Maroon Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at the American University of Beirut, SPARK

This paper presents takeaways from the IGNITE TechTalk Conference which brought together experts in digital technologies, youth employment, entrepreneurship, and higher education. The conference focused on the challenges and opportunities to equip youth with the required digital skills for future work, with a particular focus on Lebanon.



Youth Talks - and Future Resilience

Organizers: AGF, Udacity, and the UNESCO Regional Centre for Educational Planning

This paper, based on insights from panelists, including youth, employers, and trainers, focused on the digital skills required for the future of employment. The paper stresses the importance of staying updated on digital economy requirements to prepare for a sustainable future.



AGF at the MENA Universities Summit

Innovative pathways: Experiential learning as a catalyst for holistic talent development

Organizers: AGF, Times Higher Education, New York University Abu Dhabi

This paper emphasizes the importance of innovation, agility, and strong partnerships in incorporating sustainability and equity in higher education.



Why universities are vital to the MENA region's economic and environmental sustainability

Organizers: AGF, Times Higher Ed, New York University Abu Dhabi

This spotlight highlights the significance of diversity in higher education leadership as well as the importance of adopting a sustainability mindset and effective partnerships in designing future-fit programs.



Knowledge Production

The Foundation strives to promote knowledge sharing in the Arab region by fostering a culture of research and learning. In line with its commitment to supporting a community of evidence-informed decision-makers, the Foundation shares its successful approaches, lessons learned, and expertise through numerous knowledge products.



Additional Publications

- Empowering Tomorrow's Workforce: Insights from a Work Integrated Learning Readiness Assessment in the UAE
- Capacity Needs Assessment Toolkit for Online Learning
- Internship Guide for Students, Employers, and Universities

Spotlights | monthly publications highlighting topics pertaining to youth, the education ecosystem, and Foundation programs and initiatives.

- Al Ghurair Foundation Youth Advisory Council
- Academic and Career Counselling for Elevated Livelihoods
- Bridging the Employability Gap: The 3Cs Approach
- Navigating the Future: 2022 Annual Report
- Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation Internship Guide
- Monitoring and Evaluation for Impactful Philanthropies
- Youth's Role in Climate Mitigation
- Achieving Quality in Online Learning
- Empowering Futures: The Success Story of YTP
- Leveraging Strategic Philanthropy for Sustainable Impact
- AGF at the MENA Universities Summit 2023
- Nomu — UAE based initiative going regional

Opinion Pieces

- Talent Challenge to Disrupt Businesses & Industries in Line with Digital Transformation (Fast Company)
- Arab youth unemployment is staggering - but there is a way forward (The National)
- Online Learning: A Pathway to Inclusive Higher Education (The HR Observer)
- Think 'strategic philanthropy' to make longer lasting impact on future employment (Gulf News)
- Refugee education is a high-yield investment for host countries (The National)
- Investing in Refugee Education: Pathway to Growth and Economic Diversity (CNN Business)
- The role of workplace learning in empowering future-ready graduates (The National; Arabian Business)
- The Key to Saving Youth from Violent Paths? Inclusive Higher Education (Al Jazeera; Al Jazeera Bosnian)
- Why early career skilling is so crucial for young Emiratis (Khaleej Times)



Stakeholder Engagement

The Foundation collaborates with different stakeholders in the education ecosystem to:

- Empower youth and create awareness.
- Include diverse perspectives at every stage of programmatic development and implementation.
- Positively impact learners' achievements and outcomes.



| Al Ghurair Foundation Youth Advisory Council

Launched in: 2022

The Foundation puts youth at the center of the conceptualization, planning, and implementation of its programs.

Accordingly, the Council was established to:



Embed the views of youth into Foundation programming.



Support the Foundation's thought leadership, research, and programmatic efforts.



Shape future initiatives, enabling the Foundation to gather feedback for informed decisions.



Work with the Foundation to determine the best interventions for the most positive impact.

The Council, composed of 14 passionate Emirati and Arab youth, supports the Foundation's commitment to contribute to the UAE's and the region's sustainable development. The Foundation relies on the Council members to further understand youth's aspirations, ambitions, and challenges.

In 2023, the Council was actively engaged with the Foundation in sharing ideas, market insights, and potential interventions for new projects. Council members also represented the Foundation at national, regional, and international events, networking with relevant stakeholders.

Community Engagement Events

In 2023, the Foundation held more than 10 community engagement events, bringing together youth, parents, education providers, and program participants, among others.

- **Swalef Al Ghurair**

Swalef Al Ghurair was launched in 2023, serving as a platform to network and learn about youth's needs, aspirations, and challenges. With events across Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, and Al Ain, Swalef Al Ghurair reached 170+ youth.



Swalef Al Ghurair Sharjah



Swalef Al Ghurair Ras Al Khaimah



Swalef Al Ghurair Fujairah



Swalef Al Ghurair Al Ain



- **University Engagement**

The Foundation hosted two university visits in 2023. The visits covered topics like the pillars of successful strategic philanthropy, best practices in implementing tailored programs, and the importance of outcome-driven approaches in achieving meaningful impact.



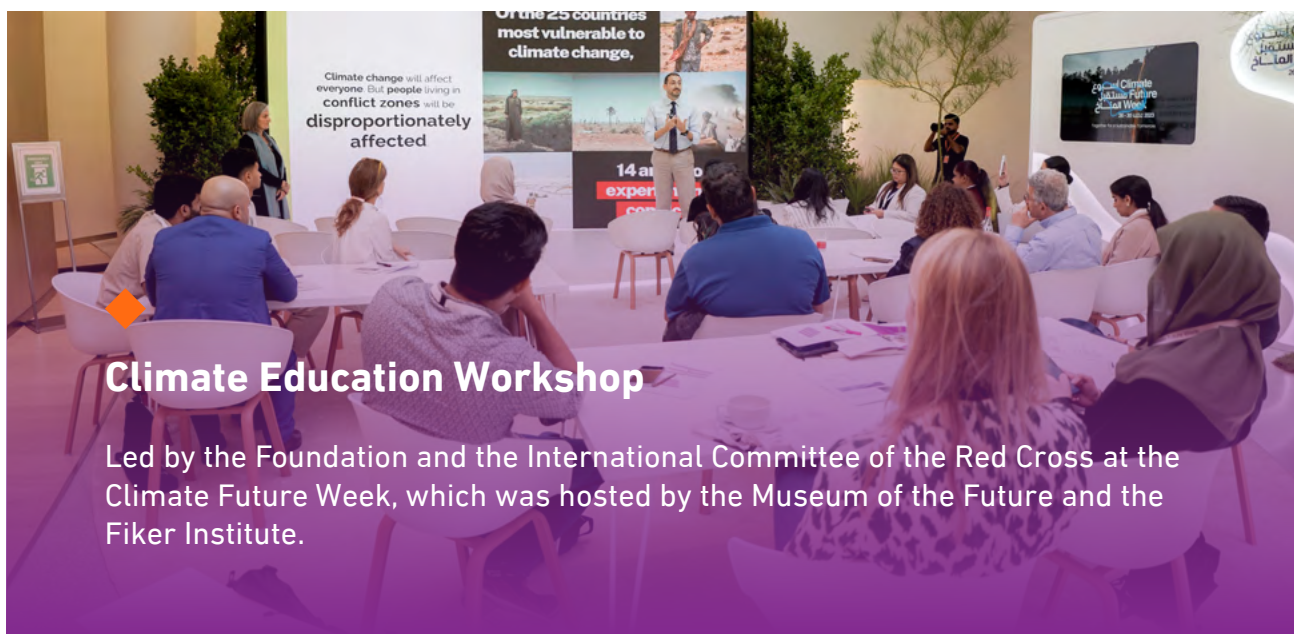
- **Learner and Alumni Engagement**

The Foundation is committed to creating a connected community of learners and program graduates to encourage collaboration and networking.



- **Partners Engagement**

In line with its strategic philanthropy approach rooted in meaningful partnerships, the Foundation collaborates with key stakeholders. This includes engaging them in vital discussions to promote collective action, design and implement robust programs, and lead crucial discourses on youth and sustainability related topics.





Learn more and stay updated

Our website
alghurairfoundation.org

Connect with us on social media:



Email us at info@alghurairfoundation.org

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“Seeking an education is not only about personal achievement but also our civic and religious responsibility as Arabs and Muslims. I hope this foundation will help deserving young Arabs fulfill their education quest and that they in turn will help others.”

Abdulla Al Ghurair, Our Founder



Creating Pathways to Opportunities